

## ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS FALL 2018

PHIL 155-01 | Tue/Thur 12:15-1:30 pm | ECTR 111

**Instructor:** Dr. Ian M. Sullivan  
**Pronouns:** *they/them/their* or *he/him/his*  
**Email:** sullivanim@cofc.edu

**Office:** 16 Glebe Street, #301  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 10-12 noon  
Thursdays 10-12 noon  
By appointment

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce you to central ethical, social, and political issues concerning the environment and will develop your ability to interpret these issues from a variety of perspectives, including deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics, and feminist ethics. Issues will range from the more strictly personal (Why do you value nature?) to the social and systemic (How is gender justice inextricably tied to our discussions of environmental justice?). Engagement with these issues will be primarily through our course textbook, additional philosophical essays, and concrete cases provided in both. When appropriate, contemporary cases arising in the media will be brought into class for discussion.

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### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Primary objectives of the course:

1. The course aims to develop student skills in responsible ethical reasoning through repeated analysis of particular cases from different theoretical perspectives.
2. The course aims to develop student skills in critical-analytical writing through an issue analysis paper.
3. The course aims to develop student skills in responsible dialogue and collaborative inquiry through frequent class discussions and small group exercises.

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### GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. *Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted, or valued in various expressions of human culture.* This SLO will be evaluated with a 5-6 page analytical, interpretive, or comparative essay worth 20% of the final grade. See “Issue Analysis Paper” in “Assignments” below for details.
2. *Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the humanities area under study and interpret the material in writing assignments.* This SLO will be evaluated with a 5-6 page analytical, interpretive, or comparative essay worth 20% of the final grade. See “Issue Analysis Paper” in “Assignments” below for details.

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### REQUIRED TEXTS

The required text is available in the campus bookstore. The ISBN is provided for those of you who wish to purchase the texts elsewhere.

**Required:** Ronald Sandler. *Environmental Ethics: Theory in Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, June 2017. ISBN 978-0-1993-40729.

PDFs of selected primary and secondary readings will be distributed electronically on our course website throughout the semester. You are required to bring electronic or hard copies of the readings to class.

Essays on general background concepts and theories can be found in the following three online resources:

(SEP) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu>

(IEP) *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu>

(PC) *Philosophy Compass*, a journal available in the library’s online resources

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## ASSESSMENT

Class Participation	10%	A	93% and above
Quizzes		A-	90-92.9%
- Unannounced	15%	B+	87-89.9%
- Module	30%	B	83-86.9%
Argument Outline	5%	B-	80-82.9%
Issue Analysis Paper		C+	77-79.9%
- Written Presentation	15%	C	73-76.9%
- Presentation	5%	C-	70-72.9%
Final Exam	20%	D	60-69.9% (no +/-)
		F	59.9% and below

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## ASSIGNMENTS

**Class Participation (10% of the final grade):** Class participation is essential for this course. In addition to the attendance and electronic device policies below, one must actively engage in class lectures and discussions. Two recognized forms of participation are oral participation and active listening. Oral participation involves engaging one's classmates respectfully and thoughtfully in dialogue during lectures, inquiries, and small group exercises. Active listening involves respectfully and thoughtfully attending to comments and suggestions from one's classmates during lectures, inquiries, and small group exercises.

**Unannounced quizzes (15% of the final grade):** These will occur randomly throughout this semester at the beginning of class (so don't be late!) and will total 15% of the final grade. The quiz question for each day will be taken from the review questions provided for that day's assigned reading. You can find these questions, along with key terms, at the end of each chapter in the textbook. For primary sources (those pdfs distributed throughout the semester), I will provide review questions in class before the reading is due.

Reading philosophy can be difficult. For the most part, our textbook is fairly accessible. However, especially when we read primary sources in the latter half of the semester, it will be important to have a good reading strategy. I will have read the assigned readings multiple times before we meet, and it is expected that you do the same. One approach to reading philosophy uses an analogy to medicine. At first we want to understand *anatomy*: What is in front of us? Next we will try to understand *physiology*: How does all of this work? Once we have completed these first two steps, we will turn to *surgery*: How can I correct or improve what is in front of me so that it works better? Readings and class lectures are primarily about anatomy and physiology, and the review questions in the textbook are meant to help with these stages of critique. Community inquiries and writing assignments will focus more on surgery.

For our class, be sure to read through and answer the review questions at the end of each chapter before coming to class. These will help you to get a handle on the anatomy and physiology dimensions of the reading. You are also encouraged to read through and sketch answers for the discussion questions provided at the end of each chapter. We will use these as starting points for critical discussion in class (i.e., surgery).

You must provide your own paper for the quizzes. Quizzes cannot be made up if the absence or tardiness is unexcused. These quizzes are meant to make sure everyone is prepared for class so that our discussions are lively and fruitful. This is an easy 15% of your grade if you do the reading, take notes, and get to class on time.

**Module quizzes (30% of the final grade):** These will conclude every module (see schedule below). Each of these six (6) quizzes will be worth 5% of the final grade for a total of 30% of the final grade. Module quizzes will test for comprehension of the key terms for each module as well as the review questions for all module readings. Key terms and review questions can be found at the end of each chapter in the textbook or in in-class announcements for primary sources distributed during the semester. Whereas unannounced quizzes are testing for whether or not readings have been completed (i.e., you still get full credit if you get

the answer wrong in a way that proves you did the reading and thought about the question before class), module quizzes will require complete and correct responses for each key term and review question.

Module quizzes are not simply capping each module's material, but also preparing you for the final exam, which will in a sense be a "Super Module Quiz" comprised of key term identification as well as challenging versions of review and discussion questions from the textbook. (More on this below.)

**Argument Outline (5% of the final grade):** Due online by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>. This assignment contains two elements: (1) A detailed outline of the article assigned for our October 11<sup>th</sup> class, and (2) a synopsis of this article that ends with at least one critical question for the author.

For the detailed outline, you will provide a single phrase or sentence summary of each paragraph of the reading selection. These sentences should be in your own words rather than copied directly from the text. As you summarize each paragraph, identify with an asterisk (\*) those moments when the author's point became clearer to you (i.e., your "a-ha" moments). Provide a sentence explaining what it was that became clearer. The goal of this part of the assignment is to demonstrate the value of slow, careful, philosophical reading.

For the second half of this assignment you will draw from your detailed outline to organize a clear and complete synopsis of the philosopher's main argument, identifying stated and implicit premises as well as logical relations between premises and conclusions. This should be approximately 200-300 words. After the outline is complete, identify at least two places in the argument where you see a logical error, a factual error, or a problematic omission or ambiguity and explain why these points of critique are significant. This last portion need only be two or three sentences in length.

**Issue Analysis Paper – Written Submission (15% of the final grade):** Due online by 11:59 pm on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. This 5-6 page paper will philosophically analyze from multiple perspectives an issue broached in class this semester (e.g., anthropogenic climate change as understood from anthropocentric, deep ecological, and ecofeminist perspectives). You are expected to draw from all relevant readings from previous modules (citations are expected) as well as to bring in outside sources. Each paper must utilize at least two (2) outside philosophical articles and two (2) outside non-philosophical sources (such as descriptive scientific or journalistic accounts of the issue or a case exemplifying the issue). This paper should be both comprehensive in its identification of morally and politically salient elements and persuasive in its offered resolution and handling of potential objections. The issue analysis is worth 15% of the final grade. All written work will be graded for argumentative content and checked with originality software (see section below on academic honesty).

Paper topics are due by email by Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>. Before that date, everyone should meet with me briefly to workshop their topic. The paper topic email should include a 200-300 word abstract of the project as well as a list of outside sources.

**Issue Analysis Paper – Oral Presentation (5% of the final grade):** In the final two weeks of class, everyone will present their issue analysis papers to the group. Length of time per presentation will depend on enrollment, but you should expect to present for at least five and no more than ten minutes. These presentations do not require a polished and finalized issue analysis paper, but the paper should be in some stage of general organization at this point (i.e., perhaps not a full completed draft, but certainly more than an open question you plan on answering before the deadline). You will be expected to present clearly and concisely the entirety of your main argument, and for parts of the argument you are still working on, you will be expected at least to sketch how you think that part will work and to identify any reservations you might have about this sketch. For the question and answer session afterwards, you will be expected to handle questions well and incorporate any potential critiques into your final draft.

**Final Exam (20% of the final grade):** The exam will be comprehensive and held during the final exam period (see schedule below). You will be assessed on mastery of key terms and concepts anatomically, physiologically, and surgically. In short, the final exam is your opportunity to demonstrate that you are an environmental ethicist capable of speaking authoritatively on issues ranging from the grounds of moral status and the nature of value to the connection between social justice and the environment on local and global scales. The exam will be manageable if you keep on top of the readings throughout the semester, take notes during class, and engage fully during lectures and community inquiries. *It is not possible to begin exam preparations during the final weeks of the semester and still do well on the exam.*

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## COURSE POLICIES

**This Is a Safe Space:** This class is structured around interactive lectures, discussions, and community inquiries in order to bring philosophical issues to life. This will mean, at times, sharing our own narratives and experiences (if one so desires) in order to assess the validity and desirability of certain normative judgments and perspectives. Ultimately this will result in our developing our own philosophical voices that we can bring out into the world with us. For this to work, however, we must have a space and a community in which we feel safe enough to make mistakes and are strong enough to move forward together in the learning process. On the first day of class, we will have an open discussion of what a safe space means for us and we will sign a Safe Space Pledge promising to maintain that space for ourselves and each other over the course of the semester.

**Accessibility and Support Services:** I take your education very seriously, and I will make every effort to accommodate any disabilities or special needs that may affect your learning or performance.

If you require special arrangements for attending class or doing assignments, please speak with me as soon as possible. Please also apply for accommodation services at the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104 (<http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu>).

If you or someone you know would like to discuss confidential information about health or mental health care, please visit the following College of Charleston websites:

For Student Health Services generally: <http://studenthealth.cofc.edu/health-wellness/index.php>

For mental health generally: <http://studenthealth.cofc.edu/health-wellness/mental-health.php>

For mental health emergencies: <http://counseling.cofc.edu/crisis/index.php>

Anyone who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students office for support (<http://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/student-food-temp-housing-asst/index.php>). Furthermore, please notify me by email or in person if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess.

**Attendance:** The participation portion of the final grade (10%) will be determined primarily through a daily sign-in sheet. Each of you is responsible for signing in for each class meeting. If you are late and arrive after the sign-in sheet has been returned to me, be sure to sign in immediately after class. This is your only record of attendance and cannot be negotiated at the end of the semester. Be sure you sign in every day.

Absences for valid reasons will always be accommodated and will not affect your final grade so long as communication is kept open. This means contacting me about the absence *before* the class period for which you will be absent or, if there is an emergency, contacting me as soon as possible once the situation is stable. Missed assignments must be completed within two (2) school days of returning to campus unless explicit written permission for an extension is granted.

Because this class is designed around interactive lectures and group discussions, consistent attendance is paramount. *More than three (3) unexcused absences will result in a 0% for participation for the semester.*

**Course Communication:** The best way to reach me is by email ([sullivanm@cofc.edu](mailto:sullivanm@cofc.edu)). I will check this account routinely between 9 am and 5 pm on weekdays throughout the semester. If you email during the weekend or in the evening, I'll respond the next weekday at the latest.

Please swing by my office this semester! I'm always excited to talk shop or just chat outside of class. Office hours are from 10 to 11 am on Wednesdays and Thursdays, but I'm often in my office (Room 301 in 16 Glebe Street) Monday through Thursday if I'm not in class. If you have a scheduling conflict with the listed office hours, I am more than happy to meet by appointment at another time. If you wish to schedule a meeting outside of office hours, be sure to contact me the day before you'd like to meet at the

latest. I cannot guarantee meetings scheduled by email the day of, though I will do my best to coordinate with you if the situation arises.

When emailing me, always use your College of Charleston account. This is a policy meant to protect your privacy. Your CofC account is the only account I can verify as yours and therefore is the only account to which I'll respond.

**Assignment Extensions:** All written assignments are due by the date and time listed in the schedule below in bold. For every 24-hour period beginning the minute after the deadline, late papers will receive a 10% deduction. Extensions will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances and even then only on a case-by-case basis. All extensions must be cleared with me no later than 24 hours prior to the deadline. Extensions will not be granted within 24 hours of the due date unless they are required in accordance with the attendance policy above. Any and all extensions required due to a documented disability will of course be accommodated. If in doubt about whether an extension will be permissible, please contact me.

**Electronics:** All electronic devices must be silenced or turned off during class, with the following exceptions: (1) electronic devices required due to disability or another similarly significant situation (please clear these with me at the beginning of the semester); (2) laptops and tablets used for taking notes or reading electronic copies of the class text.

Laptops and tablets used for note-taking and e-reading are a privilege. If one opts to use a laptop or tablet for these purposes, the following activities are *strictly prohibited*: internet browsing, video and audio streaming, messaging, social media curating, reading or writing for other classes, and the like. Your facial expressions and your body language change noticeably when engaging in these activities instead of listening and taking notes. We'll all notice. Violation of this policy will result in a loss of participation points for the class period. Repeated violations will result in the loss of electronic device privileges for the remainder of the semester.

No electronic devices of any sort are permitted during community inquiries.

**Recording and Dissemination:** Recording and disseminating class lectures, discussions, and materials is prohibited without my prior permission. See the safe space policy above.

**Writing Tutors:** Some of your work this semester will be written. Please don't hesitate to utilize the Writing Lab's resources, including the help of a writing tutor. More information can be found at this website: <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>

The Department of Philosophy at Wellesley College also has a useful website dedicated to writing philosophy. Please visit this site early and often this semester and see me with any questions you might have: <https://sites.google.com/a/wellesley.edu/pinkguidetophilosophy/>

**Academic Integrity:** Failing to indicate when material is taken from someone else is academically dishonest and will not be tolerated. All work you hand in must be your own and the proper attribution of ideas and language must be done with care. A copy of the College of Charleston Honor Code can be found at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>. Any instance of plagiarism, cheating, or the like, will result in a failing grade for the assignment and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Repeat offenses or egregious first offenses will result in a failing grade for the course and be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. I will make use of online plagiarism detection services, and your papers will be archived in their database. If you have any questions about this policy please come talk to me. For more information on academic integrity and how to maintain it: <http://libguides.library.cofc.edu/academicintegrity>

**Concerns Regarding the Course:** You are encouraged to discuss concerns regarding the course with me as soon as they arise. I'd like this semester to be as pleasant and productive for everyone as possible, and the sooner I am aware of concerns the sooner I can address them. If you are more comfortable pursuing a concern with someone else, please contact Dr. Larry Krasnoff, Chair of the Department of Philosophy ([krasnoff@cofc.edu](mailto:krasnoff@cofc.edu)).

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## SCHEDULE

\*Schedule subject to change. Pay attention to announcements in class, and if you are absent one day, be sure to check in with a classmate regarding any changes to the schedule.

\*\*All readings followed by “(PDF)” will be made available through our course website.

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### MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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Tuesday, Aug. 21: Course Introduction; What is Environmental Ethics?

**Due: *Environmental Ethics (EE)* ch. 1, pp. 2-13**

Thursday, Aug. 23: Methods of Environmental Ethics

**Due: *EE* ch 2, pp. 16-36**

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### MODULE 2: NATURE AND NATURALNESS

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Tuesday, Aug. 28: The Normativity of Nature

**Due: *EE* ch. 3, pp. 40-63**

Thursday, Aug. 30: Natural Value

**Due: Modules 1 and 2 Quiz at the end of class**

**Due: *EE* ch. 4, pp. 66-86**

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### MODULE 3: MORAL CONSIDERABILITY: WHICH INDIVIDUALS MATTER?

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Tuesday, Sept. 4: Anthropocentrism, Ratiocentrism, and Indirect Duties

**Due: *EE* ch. 5, pp. 90-113**

Thursday, Sept. 6: Enlightened Anthropocentrism: Efficiency, Sustainability, and Future Generations

**Due: *EE* ch. 6, pp. 116-35**

Tuesday, Sept. 11: Nonanthropocentric Individualism

**Due: *EE* ch. 7, pp. 138-64**

Thursday, Sept. 13: Community Inquiry

**Due: Module 3 Quiz at beginning of class**

**Due: Review all Discussion Questions in *EE*; Post two questions of your own online**

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### MODULE 4: NORMATIVE THEORIES: HOW DO THINGS MATTER?

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Tuesday, Sept. 18: Consequentialist Environmental Ethics

**Due: *EE* ch. 8, pp. 168-95**

Thursday, Sept. 20: Deontological Environmental Ethics

**Due: *EE* ch. 9, pp. 198-219**

Tuesday, Sept. 25: Character Ethics

**Due: *EE* ch. 10, pp. 222-39**

Thursday, Sept. 27: Community Inquiry

**Due: Module 4 Quiz at beginning of class**

**Due: Review all Discussion Questions in *EE*; Post two questions of your own online**

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### MODULE 5: HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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Tuesday, Oct. 2: Ecocentrism

**Due: *EE* ch. 11, pp. 242-69**

Thursday, Oct. 4: Ecocentrism, continued

**Due: Helen Kopnina, 2016, "Of big hegemonies and little tigers: Ecocentrism and environmental justice" (PDF)**

Tuesday, Oct. 9: Deep Ecology

**Due: *EE* ch. 12, pp. 272-91**

Thursday, Oct. 11: Deep Ecology, continued

**Due: Argument Outline for Diehm's essay. Submit online by *Wed., Oct. 10, 11:59 pm***

**Due: Christian Diehm, 2002, "Arne Naess, Val Plumwood, and deep ecological subjectivity: A contribution to the deep ecology-ecofeminism debate" (PDF)**

Tuesday, Oct. 16: Species and Biodiversity

**Due: *EE* ch. 13, pp. 294-326**

Thursday, Oct. 18: Species and Biodiversity, continued

**Due: Module 5 Quiz at beginning of class**

**Due: Freya Mathews, 2016, "From biodiversity-based conservation to an ethic of bio-proportionality" (PDF)**

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### MODULE 6: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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Tuesday, Oct. 23: Ecofeminism and Environmental Pragmatism

**Due: *EE* ch. 14, pp. 330-51**

Thursday, Oct. 25: Ecofeminism, continued

**Due: Greta Gaard, 1997, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism" (PDF)**

Tuesday, Oct. 30: Environmental Justice

**Due: *EE* ch. 15, pp. 354-80**

Thursday, Nov. 1: Environmental Justice, continued

**Due: Kyle Powys Whyte, 2013, "Justice forward: Tribes, climate adaptation, and responsibility" (PDF)**

*Tuesday, Nov. 6: Fall Break (No Class)*

**Due: Paper topics by email**

Optional: *EE* ch. 17, pp. 410-19 "Final Thoughts"

Thursday, Nov. 8: Global Justice

**Due: *EE* ch. 16, pp. 384-407**

Tuesday, Nov. 13: Global Justice, continued

**Due: Vandana Shiva, 2009, "Women and the gendered politics of food" (PDF)**

Thursday, Nov. 15: Community Inquiry

**Due: Module 6 Quiz at beginning of class**

**Due: Review all Discussion Questions in *EE*; Post two questions of your own online**

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**FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

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Tuesday, Nov. 20: Presentations

*Thursday, Nov. 22: Thanksgiving (No Class)*

Tuesday, Nov. 27: Presentations

Thursday, Nov. 29: Presentations (*Last Day of Class*)

**Saturday, Dec. 1: Final Papers due electronically by 11:59 pm**

**Tuesday, Dec. 11: Final Exam, 12-3 pm, Location TBD**